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FENNEMORE CRAIG 2005 JAN 18 P 4: 15 1 Jay L. Shapiro (No. 014650) Patrick Black (No. 017141) 2 AZ CORP COMMISSION 3003 N. Central Ave. DUCUMENT CONTROL **Suite 2600** 3 Phoenix, Arizona 85012 Attorneys for Pine Water Company, Inc. 4 5 6 7

Arizona Corporation Commission DOCKETED

JAN 1 8 2005

DOCKETED BY

BEFORE THE ARIZONA CORPORATION COMMISSION

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION OF PINE WATER COMPANY FOR A **DETERMINATION OF THE** CURRENT FAIR VALUE OF ITS UTILITY PLANT AND PROPERTY AND FOR INCREASES IN ITS RATES AND CHARGES BASED THEREON FOR UTILITY SERVICE AND FOR APPROVAL TO INCUR LONG-TERM DEBT

DOCKET NO: W-03512A-03-0279

NOTICE OF FILING DIRECT TESTIMONY OF ROBERT T. HARDCASTLE CONCERNING METER MORATORIUM AND COMPLIANCE **ISSUES**

Applicant, Pine Water Company, Inc., hereby files the Direct Testimony Of Robert T. Hardcastle Concerning Meter Moratorium And Compliance Issues, in the abovecaptioned docket.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED this 18th day of January, 2005.

FENNEMORE CRAIG

By

ay L. Shapiro Patrick J. Black

3003 North Central Avenue

Suite 2600

Phoenix, Arizona 85012

Attorneys for Pine Water Company

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1	Original and 13 copies were filed this 18 th day of January, 2005, to:
2	Docket Control
3	Arizona Corporation Commission
4	1200 West Washington Phoenix, Arizona 85007
5	A copy of the foregoing was hand-delivered this
6	18 th day of January, 2005, to:
7	Lisa Vandenberg, Staff Attorney Legal Division
8	Arizona Corporation Commission 1200 W. Washington St.
9	Phoenix, AZ 85007
10	Marlin Scott Engineering Division
11	Arizona Corporation Commission 1200 W. Washington St.
12	Phoenix, AZ 85007
13	A copy of the foregoing was mailed this 18th day of January, 2005, to:
14	John O. Breninger
15	P.O. Box 2096 3475 Whispering Pines Road
16	Pine, AZ 85544-2096
17	John G. Gliege, Esq. Law Office of John G. Gliege
18	P.O. Box 1388 Flagstaff, Arizona 86002-1388
19	Attorney for Pine-Strawberry Water Improvement District
20	Robert M. Cassaro
21	P.O. Box 1522 Pine, Arizona 85544
22	
23	
24	/
25	By: May House

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3	Suite 2600 Phoenix, Arizona 85012			
4	Attorneys for Pine Water Company, Inc.			
5				
6	BEFORE THE ARIZONA CORPORATION COMMISSION			
7				
8	IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION OF PINE WATER DOCKET NO: W-03512A-03-0279			
9	COMPANY FOR A			
10	DETERMINATION OF THE CURRENT FAIR VALUE OF ITS UTILITY PLANT AND PROPERTY			
11	AND FOR INCREASES IN ITS RATES AND CHARGES BASED			
12	THEREON FOR UTILITY SERVICE AND FOR APPROVAL TO INCUR			
13	LONG-TERM DEBT			
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19	DIRECT TESTIMONY OF ROBERT T. HARDCASTLE			
20	CONCERNING METER MORATORIUM AND COMPLIANCE ISSUES			
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1	I.	INTRODUCTION AND QUALIFICATIONS
2	Q.	PLEASE STATE YOUR NAME, BUSINESS ADDRESS AND TELEPHONE
3		NUMBER.
4	A.	Robert T. Hardcastle, 3101 State Rd., Bakersfield, California 93308. My telephone
5		number is (661) 633-7526.
6	Q.	BY WHOM ARE YOU EMPLOYED AND IN WHAT CAPACITY?
7	A.	I am the President of Brooke Utilities, Inc. ("Brooke"). Brooke is the sole
8		shareholder of the Applicant, Pine Water Company, Inc. ("PWCo" or the
9		"Company"). I am also the Company's President.
10	Q.	ARE YOU THE SAME ROBERT T. HARDCASTLE THAT PREVIOULSY
11		TESTIFIED IN THIS DOCKET?
12	A.	Yes, my direct, rebuttal and rejoinder testimonies were admitted into evidence in
13		the rate setting portion of this proceeding along with my live testimony during the
14		hearings.
15	Q.	HAVE YOU REVIEWED THE COMPLIANCE STAFF REPORT DATED
16		NOVEMBER 19, 2004 IN THIS DOCKET?
17	A.	Yes.
18	Q.	IS THE PURPOSE OF YOUR TESTIMONY IN THIS PROCEEDING AT
19		THIS TIME TO RESPOND TO THAT COMPLAINCE STAFF REPORT?
20	A.	Yes. More specifically, I will address two aspects of that report. First, I will
21		address Staff's analysis and recommendations concerning a total moratorium on
22		new customer connections in the PWCo service territory. Next, I will address the
23		ADEQ compliance issues raised in Staff's November 19 Compliance Staff Report
24		(the "Report").
25	Q.	WOULD YOU PLEASE SUMMARIZE THE COMPANY'S POSITION ON
26		THESE TWO ISSUES?

Yes. Regarding the recommended moratorium, I submit that adoption of Staff's recommendation will exacerbate rather than improve the difficulties we face managing limited water supplies in the area the Company serves. This follows from the fact that, to the extent there is a demand for residential and/or commercial growth in the area, if PWCo does not serve those customers someone else will using the same water supplies we utilize to serve our existing customers. Consequently, I believe it is better for the Commission and Company to work together to manage growth in the PWCo CC&N rather than ceding control to Gila County and the local real estate and development community, or worse, creating an incentive for those entities to grow the community outside the current regulatory structure, while utilizing the same water supply relied upon by PWCo and its customers.

Regarding the compliance matters, PWCo began working immediately with ADEQ to address the concerns raised and close the compliance files. I wish to note, however, that because the concerns raised by ADEQ are primarily historic deficiencies, we are confident that we have been, are now and will continue to deliver water that meets all applicable water quality requirements.

II. MORATORIUM ON NEW METERS

- Q. HAS THE COMMISSION PREVIOUSLY ADDRESSED THE ISSUE OF A MORATORIUM ON NEW METER CONNECTIONS IN THE PWCo SYSTEM?
- A. Yes, on numerous occasions and I cannot describe the entire history of moratoria in and around Pine, Arizona in this testimony because to do so would unduly lengthen this filing. By way of summary though, to the best of our knowledge the Commission first imposed various moratoria on new service connections and main extensions in the area served by PWCo's predecessors E&R Water Company, Inc.

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and Williamson Water Works, Inc. in 1989 due to "historical water shortages in and around the Pine, Arizona area." *See* Decision 64400 (Jan. 31, 2002), *citing* Decision Nos. 56539 (July 12, 1989) and 56654 (Oct. 6, 1989).

Q. HOW LONG HAVE THESE VARIOUS MORATORIA BEEN IN EFECT?

The Commission has kept the moratoria in effect in one form or another through the present. For example, in Decision No. 59753 (July 18, 1996), E&R was limited to one residential connection per month with a complete moratoria on new main extensions. See Decision No. 64400 at 1. Then, in Decision 64400 the Commission modified the moratoria on new connections and main extension agreements for the portion of the PWCo CC&N previously certificated to E&R. Specifically, with respect to new connections, the Commission modified the moratorium to allow the Company to add up to 25 new service connections per month based on the joint recommendation of Staff and the Company. Additionally, with respect to main extension agreements, the Commission allowed the Company to enter into main extension agreements if the developer could contribute a certain minimum quantity of water to PWCo. Then, in Decision No. 65435 (December 9, 2002), the Commission extended these moratoria to the entirety of the PWCo CC&N.

Q. WHAT WAS THE BASIS FOR THE COMMISSION'S DECISION TO MODIFY THE MORATORIA IN DECISION 64400?

A. I believe it was twofold. First, as Decision No. 64400 reflects, since acquiring the system we have taken a number of steps to improve water delivery and to enhance the available supply of water to the Company's customers. Second, from our perspective, we faced repeated and concerted efforts by local developers and Gila County to circumvent our CC&N and the Commission imposed moratoria.

Q. CAN YOU EXPLAIN WHAT YOU MEAN?

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Yes, it is no secret to the Commission that for some time now Gila County has desired to and taken steps towards expanding the population in this portion of the County despite the water supply deficiencies. Whether the local real estate community that supports this effort is the reason for the County's desire to expand the population or whether the County, desirous of increasing its tax base has expressed a desire that has spawned the local real estate community, I really cannot say. Either way, the result was that the Company was facing direct pressure from the County and the real estate community to expand its service and increase customer connections as well as indirect pressure through the formation of County improvement districts which became competitors for a limited water supply. Thus, we petitioned and Staff supported the modified moratoria approved in Decision No. 64400. To the credit of the Commission and Staff, a far-sighted decision was issued in which the Commission weighed the various alternatives and recognized that the lesser evil was to approve a moratorium that enhanced the agency's control over the local water supply and, at the same time, applied water conservation measures in an area where Gila County had failed to balance growth and resource use for many years.

Q. CAN YOU PROVIDE SPECIFIC EXAMPLES OF SUCH INDIRECT PRESSURE MR. HARDCASTLE?

A. Yes. Again, the Commission should recall the lengthy dispute between PWCo and the Strawberry Hollow Domestic Water Improvement District. That District was formed by a developer wishing to construct a 70 plus lot subdivision in PWCo's CC&N. Unable to obtain an extension of service from PWCo to his residential subdivision, the developer successfully petitioned Gila County to create the improvement district with boundaries inside our certificated service area.

Q. WHAT WAS THE COMPANY'S RESPONSE TO THE FORMATION OF

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THE DISTRICT?

A. PWCo brought suit against Gila County challenging the County's right to form a water improvement district without consideration of the availability of water supplies or the impact of such formation on the existing community and its water provider. Unfortunately, after incurring more than \$100,000 in litigation fees and costs, the Court disagreed and essentially concluded that the County's discretion is so broad that it need not consider anything other than whether the requisite number of signatures from property owners is contained in the request to form an improvement district.

Q. WHY WOULD PWCO SPEND THAT KIND OF MONEY TO CHALLENGE THE FORMATION OF AN IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT BY GILA COUNTY?

Because the creation of competitive water providers in our service area threatens A. our ability to serve our customers and the Commission's ability to help regulate the use of the area's limited water supplies. Let me explain it this way, the groundwater supplies available in PWCo's CC&N are limited and in the end it does not matter whether the water supplies are being pumped by PWCo's wells or somebody else's wells; the water supply is still being used. Thus, when the Commission precluded us from hooking up new customers, it inadvertently created an incentive for Gila County and the real estate community to create alternative water providers. Unfortunately, those providers then utilized water supplies that would otherwise be available to PWCo to serve its customers. Obviously, a number of separate water providers working independently poses a greater threat to the region's limited water supplies than one provider serving all of the customers in the area and well aware of the needs to manage limited water supplies on a regional basis.

Q. DID STAFF ADDRESS THESE CONCERNS IN THE REPORT?

A. No, and that is one of the things that concerns me regarding Staff's analysis. Put bluntly, if we could consider the situation in a vacuum the Company would likely agree with Staff that there are inadequate water supplies available to PWCo to allow for additional customers to be connected to the system. But, Staff ignores the fact that it does not matter whether the Company or some other provider serves those new customers. In the end, the affect is the same as we have only a limited supply of water and I can not help but think that the Company and the Commission, as its regulator, would be better off managing the overall use of the limited supply, including using such supply to serve new customers, than by having the County engage in regional water management and continue to form independent providers serving small areas according to their own needs.

Q. DO YOU HAVE ANY OTHER CONCERNS WITH THE REPORT?

A. Yes, my other concern involves Staff's assessment of the Company's available water supply. It does not appear that Staff has offered a complete enough assessment of the Company's water supply to justify its recommendation that the Commission reimpose a complete moratorium on new service connections.

Q. WOULD YOU PLEASE EXPLAIN WHAT YOU MEAN?

A. Certainly. In the Report, Staff concludes that PWCo's well production could adequately serve up to 555 service connections during peak periods but notes that PWCO has 1,992 active accounts. Staff is fully aware that we supplement our water supply from various sources, most notably Project Magnolia, which brings water from our neighboring Strawberry Water Company system into PWCo's service area. Yet, the Report provides only a brief mention of this critical water supply. In addition, we have made arrangements to purchase water that can be hauled into the system as needed. The totality of available water sources available

to the Company to meet the needs of its customers has been the subject of numerous Commission proceedings and decisions, including the decisions I referenced above, and I believe any assessment of PWCo and its available water supply and certainly any recommendations made to the Commission must take into account not only PWCo's in-service territory production capacity but these additional sources. In short, the Commission should take into account evidence of the excellent job PWCo has done over the past 9 years to manage a very limited water supply under the most adverse circumstances imaginable.

- Q. DOES THAT MEAN THE COMPANY OPPOSES STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION THAT NO NEW METER CONNECTIONS BE ALLOWED?
- A. Unfortunately, yes. While we are in complete agreement with Staff that we face serious water supply limitations in the Pine area, we are very concerned that precluding the Company from adding a reasonable number of new connections will create an incentive for Gila County and/or the local real estate and development community, likely still desirous of growing Northern Gila County and increasing the tax base, to continue to find ways to circumvent the Commission moratoria. The consequence of such circumvention is the continued carving up of PWCo's CC&N. I am afraid what will happen is that we will continue to incur substantial amounts to protect our property rights and protect our limited water supplies and ultimately will end up with the same customer being served by another water provider.

It should be noted that after years of long term water supply problems, Gila County, despite their complete knowledge of the situation, has never attempted to enact local water conservation measures to limit cultivation of the local water supply through the expansion of development interests in the area. PWCo believes

the reasons for this lack of political leadership are self-serving. Meanwhile, we submit that the best solution for all is for the Commission, Staff and the Company to continue to work together to manage the limited water supply in a regional fashion that accounts for all of the customers in the area and all the supplies in the area. That cannot be done if PWCo is the only provider restricted from meeting new customer demand. Indeed, I fear that if the Commission does not take this broader outlook, although it might be the more difficult avenue, proper management and regulation of the region's limited water supplies could be permanently hampered.

III. <u>COMPLIANCE ISSUES</u>

Q. HOW DOES THE COMPANY ADDRESS THE COMPLIANCE ISSUES RAISED IN THE REPORT?

- A. There are essentially three compliance areas I will address in this testimony. First, there is the 1994 Consent Order issued to E&R Water Company. Second, there are violation notices relating to two of the wells from which PWCo obtains water for service to its customers. Third, there are a number of alleged plant facility deficiencies raised by ADEQ in its inspection report. I will address each of these in turn.
- Q. BEFORE DOING THAT MR. HARDCASTLE, DOESN'T THE STAFF REPORT ALSO REFER TO AN NOV FOR STRAWBERRY WATER COMPANY?
- A. Yes it does and I am not sure why, given that Strawberry Water Company and PWCo are separate entities. In any event, based on Staff's communication with the ADEQ, the Report references an alleged failure to provide the Consumer Confidence Report for Strawberry Water Company. We did not fail to provide this and timely filed it in April 2003. Subsequently, after learning that despite

providing these materials to ADEQ the agency believed they were not filed, they were again submitted. Then, when we saw this item referenced in the Report, a third copy of the Consumer Confidence Report for Strawberry Water Company was submitted directly to the ADEQ representative handling this matter for the agency. As a result, ADEQ has now closed this NOV. *See* Letter dated January 12, 2005 attached hereto as Exhibit A.

Q. WOULD YOU PLEASE ADDRESS THE 1994 CONSENT ORDER RELATING TO E&R WATER COMPANY?

A. Yes. To begin with, this problem predates our acquisition of the PWCo system and I am concerned that the implication is that the Company has simply ignored this matter. Indeed, despite several inspections of the system by ADEQ since we acquired it, it wasn't raised by ADEQ, we did not see anything regarding it in ADEQ's records when we conducted our due diligence and simply did not know there was an outstanding matter.

Q. NOW THAT YOU ARE AWARE WHAT IS THE COMPANY DOING TO ADDRESS THE OUTSTANDING 1994 CONSENT ORDER?

A. Unfortunately, this is a very difficult problem. In order to close the 1994 E&R Consent Order, ADEQ wants engineering drawings for the entire portion of the PWCo system that used to be E&R Water Company. Such drawings do not exist and it would cost the Company at least tens of thousands and more likely in excess of \$100,000 to prepare an as-built set of drawings of that portion of our water system. I simply do not think this would be a prudent investment of the Company's capital, particularly given the ongoing water supply crises we face on a regular basis. Therefore, we will make an effort to resolve this issue with ADEQ but I cannot at this time inform the Commission of how it will be finally resolved.

Q. WOULD YOU PLEASE ADDRESS THE NOTICE OF VIOLATION

REGARDING THE WEEKS AND BLOOM WELLS RAISED IN THE 1 **REPORT?** 2 Yes. Staff is correct that the Company has been informed of violations for failing A. 3 to obtain an approval of construction for those wells. We have also been informed 4 of certain facilities deficiencies associated with those two wells. 5 WHEN WAS THE COMPANY NOTIFIED OF THESE VIOLATIONS? 0. 6 We were first notified of the problem during a November 2004 Field Inspection by A. 7 8 ADEQ. 0. ARE THE BLOOM AND WEEKS WELLS OWNED BY THE COMPANY? 9 The wells themselves are, however the properties where these two wells are located Α. 10 are privately-owned by third-parties. The wells were drilled in 1998 by Brooke 11 under water sharing agreements with the landowners, which agreements specify 12 **PWCo** that the water sources themselves are owned by the water provider. 13 operates several wells under these arrangements. 14 WHY DIDN'T BROOKE OBTAIN APPROVALS OF CONSTRUCTION Q. 15 FOR THE BLOOM AND WEEKS WELLS? 16 Because at the time the wells were drilled we believed that such approvals were not 17 A. necessary given that the cost of each well was under \$50,000. In hindsight it 18 appears we were mistaken. 19 Q. WHAT STEPS ARE BEING TAKEN TO ADDRESS THE NOVS FOR THE 20 21 **BLOOM AND WEEKS WELLS?** PWCO has already conducted the necessary new source sampling and has received A. 22 the test results back. The only other items required for the approvals for both wells 23 are the completed engineering drawings. Once these materials are submitted to 24 ADEO the issues giving rise to the violations will be resolved and approvals of 25 construction should be issued. . 26

Q.	IN THE MEANTIME, HAS THE COMPANY STOPPED PUMPING FROM
	THE BLOOM AND WEEKS WELLS?

- A. No and ADEQ has not directed us to do so. Moreover, it would be a burden on PWCo and its customers to shut-down the two wells as they provide approximately 22% of the Company's well production.
- Q. ARE YOU CONFIDENT THAT THE WATER FROM THE BLOOM AND WEEKS WELLS DOES NOT POSE ANY ADVERSE HEALTH RISK TO YOUR CUSTOMERS?
- A. Yes, based on the water quality testing we have conducted, we are confident that the water from those wells is safe for consumption by PWCo's customers.
- Q. WHAT ABOUT THE OTHER DEFICIENCIES NOTED IN THE NOVS FOR THE BLOOM AND WEEKS WELLS?
- A. These deficiencies are also being addressed as promptly as possible.
- Q. THE REPORT ALSO REFERS TO SOME 20 AQDDITIONAL PLANT FACILITY DEFICIENCES DISCOVERED BY ADEQ. WOULD YOU PLEASE COMMENT ON THOSE DEFICIENCIES?
- A. Yes. ADEQ has not found PWCo in violation with respect to any of these items and has set forth no obligation or timeline for repair of these items. Although the agency has not established any "due date", we do expect that these items will be corrected promptly and certainly by the next regularly scheduled field inspection. For example, we are in the process of replacing three concrete wells slabs and are installing fences around wells sites. We will complete these efforts as soon as possible given our other operational needs and capital investment requirements. Meanwhile, as discussed above, we are not aware of any problems with the quality of the water being delivered to our customers as a result of these deficiencies and the Company will take all steps to ensure that such water quality is maintained.

Q. DOES THAT CONCLUDE YOUR TESTIMONY?

A. Yes.

JSHAPIRO/1626469

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ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY



1110 West Washington Street • Phoenix, Arizona 85007 (602) 771-2300 • www.azdeq.gov

FS-05-410 January 12, 2005 CERTIFIED MAIL Return Receipt Requested 7099-3400-0015-7590-7466

Robert Hardcastle Brooke Utilities Inc. P.O. Box 82218 Bakersfield, California 93380

Re:

Closure of the November 2, 2004 Notice of Violation for E&R Water Co - Strawberry, Public

Water System No. 04-006

Dear Mr. Hardcastle:

The Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) has closed the Notice of Violation (NOV) issued to E&R Water Co - Strawberry on November 2, 2004. By closing the NOV, ADEQ has determined that E&R Water Co - Strawberry is in compliance with the specific violation identified in the November 2, 2004 NOV. This determination is based upon your letter dated December 15, 2004 in which you state, "The 2002 CCR was originally sent on April 23, 2003. We resent a copy of the CCR to Jim Puckett May 14, 2004 in response to a compliance status report."

ADEQ will not proceed with further action at this time. However, if additional information regarding the alleged violations is discovered, or if further violations occur, ADEQ may reconsider its position and take additional action as appropriate and as allowed by law.

This closure only applies to the November 2, 2004 Strawberry water system NOV. The second NOV issued to Brooke Utilities on November 2, 2004 for operating two wells in the Pine water system without an Approval of Construction is still open and valid.

If you need any additional information or help, please feel free to contact me at (800) 234-5677 ext. 771-4841.

Sincerely,

Romann G. Diaz, Manager

Water Quality Field Services Unit

cc:

Vivian Burns, ADEO

Marlin Scott, Arizona Corporation Commission

Mistie Jared, Brooke Utilities Inc., P.O. Box 82218, Bakersfield, CA 93380

Gila County Health Department

WQFSU Facility Files, PWS 04-006

WQFSU Reading File

Northern Regional Office 1515 East Cedar Avenuc • Suite F • Flagstaff, AZ 86004 (928) 779-0313 Southern Regional Office 400 West Congress Street • Suite 433 • Tucson, AZ 85701 (520) 628-6733